

**SAN DIEGO COUNTY
VETERANS ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES**

Saturday, May 10, 2014, 9:30 a.m.
San Diego County Veterans Service Office
5560 Overland Ave. Ste. 310, San Diego, CA 92123

Meeting held at the Veterans Museum and Memorial Center in Balboa Park (VMMC)

MEMBERS PRESENT

Terry Jensen; Ben Dillingham III; Nancy Owen; Michael Robledo; Mary Beth Newton; Tom Splitgerber; John Weaver; Laurie Martell

MEMBERS ABSENT

Justin Singer (U); Will Rodriguez (U)

OTHERS PRESENT

Steve Arends, One VA Co-chair; John Farrell, Chula Vista Veterans Home Resident

1. Call to Order

Mary Beth Newton Chair, called the VAC meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Introductions/Public Input (3 minutes)

4. Approval of Minutes

Motion was made and seconded to approve prior meeting minutes.

5. Chairman's Remarks

Chair Mary Beth Newton reminded everyone to complete the Ethics training required every 2 years by the County. She also reminded the VAC members a notice via email or phone call is required if they are unable to attend the VAC meeting. Per bylaws three consecutive unexcused absences constitutes a vacancy.

6. Committee Reports (Limited 5 minutes)

Legislative:

Mary Beth attended the last UVC meeting and passed out a copy of the UVC Legislative report for the minutes (attachment A).

One VA

Steve Arends announced the next One VA meeting is on 21st of May, 9:30 a.m. at the VA Medical Center in La Jolla. The issue the One VA is actively involved in is the alleged misconduct in Phoenix in scheduling veterans for primary care and allegations of veteran deaths as a result. There are also allegations of misconduct in Colorado and one of the VA Medical Centers in Texas.

Nancy Owen asked whether the Fort Rosecrans Cemetery is closed for in-ground burials. Steve said it has been closed since the 1960's for casket burials but they are removing trees to create additional space for deceased combat veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan. They did fill

their last niche. First burials now are exclusively at Miramar National Cemetery.

Chula Vista Veterans Home (CVVH)

Nancy thanked everyone for their support of the Veterans Golf Tournament. There were nearly 80 players. Preliminary report shows about \$11,000 was raised for the residents.

United Veterans Council (UVC)

Steve invited everyone to the third Legislative Forum after the VAC meeting in the same room. There will be discussion to either advocate or oppose legislative issues at the state and federal level.

Veterans Day Parade

John Weaver said he spoke to Jack Harkins who said he has been inundated from people wanting to be part of the parade.

County Veterans Service Office (CVSO)

Tom Splitgerber spoke about a Strategic Plan for the office he was assigned to work on by Nick Macchione which will probably lead to a Strategic Plan for HHSA with a veterans portion within the county itself. Statistics on veterans population and percentage of use of and needs for specific services is being gathered and will be considered for this plan.

HHSA is also acquiring a building in Escondido and Tom was asked to find 16 potential partners based on the needs of the families of veterans.

Community Reports

Nancy introduced John Farrell, Chula Vista Veterans Home resident and also Editor of their newsletter and member of the Calvet Board.

Nancy said the Navy Nurse Corps will be 106 years old on May 13th.

John Weaver spoke about the article in the San Diego Union Tribune about the possible delay of the trolley extension project toward the veterans hospital due to the discovery of fairy shrimp along the route. More environmental studies are needed.

Ben spoke about a fundraiser he attended for Prop 41 (Veterans Housing and Homeless Prevention) at Commissioner Bob Nelson's home. There is a widespread effort to raise funds to make sure that proposition passes for veterans.

Steve Arends reminded everyone to vote in June.

Unfinished Business

Veterans Hiring Policy. Fifteen responses out of 18 letters were received. Mary Beth wrote the final report with recommendations to present to the Board of Supervisors. The cover letter and final report was reviewed by VAC members. The members recommended changes. to only the cover letter. The letter will be drafted this week. Mary Beth will sign in the next couple of weeks and the letter will be mailed along with a copy of the final report to the Board of Supervisors, attention Diane Jacob.

Ex-officio position vacancy follow-up. Letter was sent to Admiral Lorge the week of 28 April. No response yet.

8. New Business

Preliminary nominations for Chair, Vice-Chair were done
Elections to be held at the next meeting in June

Mary Beth Newton was nominated for Chair- She accepted the nomination.
Michael Robledo nominated for Vice-chair - He accepted the nomination.

9. Closing Remarks

No closing remarks

10. Meeting Adjourned: The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m.